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JURY RETURNS GUILTY VERDICTS AGAINST VALLEJO CRACK DEALER *Defendant Found Guilty of Distributing Crack Cocaine*

SACRAMENTO, Calif.—Acting United States Attorney Lawrence G. Brown announced today that a federal jury convicted MARK EDWARD PARKER, 36, of Vallejo, Calif., today of three counts of conspiracy to distribute cocaine and crack cocaine, distribution of crack cocaine, and possession with intent to distribute crack cocaine after a four-day trial before United States District Judge Morrison C. England.

This case is the product of an extensive investigation by the Vallejo Police Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration. The collaboration of law enforcement agencies in this case was part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF). Established in 1982, OCDETF's principal mission is to identify, disrupt, and dismantle the most serious drug trafficking and money laundering organizations and those primarily responsible for the nation's drug supply.

According to Assistant United States Attorneys Jason Hitt and Kenneth J. Melikian, who are prosecuting the case, the evidence introduced at trial showed that for more than five years, from 1999 to 2004, PARKER was responsible for selling thousands of dollars worth of crack cocaine in Vallejo. "Crack" is the street name for a highly addictive form of cocaine base, usually prepared by processing cocaine hydrochloride and sodium bicarbonate and usually appearing in a lumpy, rocklike form.

During the trial, witnesses described two occasions where PARKER was observed converting large quantities of powder cocaine into crack cocaine (a process known as "rocking up") in the kitchen of a residence located at 828 Grant Street in Vallejo.

PARKER's crack distribution business ended on February 9, 2006. At approximately 9:45 a.m., PARKER fled from a Vallejo police officer down Fairgrounds Boulevard toward the intersection of Highway 37. He drove at a high rate of speed into the intersection, ran a red light, and smashed into a motorist. After being subdued by the pursuing Vallejo police officer, responding officers discovered a large bag of crack cocaine and marijuana in the middle of Fairgrounds Boulevard in close proximity to the driver's-side door. The bag was linked directly to PARKER's vehicle by the overwhelming odor of marijuana in his car.

PARKER is scheduled to be sentenced on May 14, 2009, at 9:00 a.m. Because he was convicted of a felony in 1994 for crack cocaine trafficking, he could face a mandatory minimum of 20 years in federal prison. The maximum statutory penalty for the charges is life in prison. The actual sentence, however, will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

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